Since the 1950s Duffy's Taxi had been proud to serve Winnipegger's.

We have a proud history and are very proud of the fact that our owners are part of this community. Individual small business people who work very hard under very difficult circumstances.

At Duffy's we have always been committed to modernizing our operation. That includes leading the way in bringing in hybrid vehicles and state-of-the-art dispatch systems.

We know that Winnipegger's look to our taxi company and the taxi Industry day in day out no matter what time of year or what the weather is.

Our message today to you Mayor Bowman and the councillors who form the EPC is that the way in which the province and the city is moving to dramatically change taxi system in Winnipeg is totally unfair.

The province is pushing bill 30 through the legislature. There was no consultation with the industry. Bill 30 does more than just transfer jurisdiction to the city it takes away our legal rights.

Here at the city of Winnipeg you haven't even waited for the passage of Bill 30. You do not know if there will be amendments. Perhaps the legislation won't even pass if the government does the right thing and withdraws it to consult with our industry and with Manitobans.

But one thing is clear you have been meeting with Uber. Mayor Bowman you met with Uber. And I would remind you that when we indicated that you had not met with the industry you initially said that you did not receive a request for a meeting. You were then forced to retract that. I hope you will take this opportunity to apologize to our industry not just for the misleading statement but the fact that even though you have been pushing for Uber from day one you have never once taken the time to listen to our industry's concerned.

What are our concerns? It starts with safety. I can't stress enough the hazards our industry faces on a daily basis. Racism, accidents, robberies and assaults. But there's one thing very unique about our industry in Winnipeg. An industry where taxi driving is one of the most unsafe occupations in North America. Here in Winnipeg we have the distinction of having one of the safest taxi industries.

This didn't just happen. It was the direct result of the aftermath of the terrible murder of Pritam Deol in 2001. Mr. Deol was a hard-working taxi driver who had only been driving for three months. He was brutally murdered. Out of this terrible tragedy came a recognition of just how much risk there was in the taxi industry. The province brought in shields, cameras and training that immediately reduced assaults by 79%. Most importantly there's not been a single murder of a taxi driver in Winnipeg since. We believe it is important to maintain the highest level of safety protection with shields, cameras and training.

We are also committed to passenger safety. I would note our full support for the current intensive scrutiny placed on the drivers. That includes English language proficiency, passing a criminal record check and a child abuse registry check. In jurisdictions around the world there are huge problems with Uber refusing to follow the same rigorous standards in terms of screening and training.

I want to talk about fairness as well. What the City of Winnipeg is doing is grossly unfair. Mayor Bowman it's clear you cut a deal with Premier Brian Pallister. You are as responsible as he is for the unfairness of Bill 30, a bill that strips us of our legal and property rights. Mayor Bowman you were elected to represent all Winnipegger's. Not a big corporation like Uber. We are your constituents. We serve this Community. You have not even taken the time to talk to us.

That is why i am speaking today in favour of the motion to establish a working group and to specifically indicate that we want to be part of any and all discussions about the future of a taxi industry.

Why don't we take the time to get it right? Mayor Bowman, EPC councillors what is your big hurry? Why won't you listen to the industry.

I can make one thing clear today, our industry is going to fight to protect not only our own interest but the interest of Winnipeggers. What you are ramming through the city will result in reduced safety, less service for people in areas in our city and an outflow of profits from our community. You will also wipe out the investments and livelihood of hundreds of Winnipeg families. The vast majority of people in our industry are proud new Canadians. Many of us came to this country with a dream of building a better future for families. We worked hard and in many case invested our lives savings into this industry. Many of us of mortgaged our homes to make a livelihood for our families. You are putting all of that at risk. As a result of what you are ramming through people will go bankrupt. Families will be unable to support their children's education. We deserve better.

We're proud of the service we provide. And we are always committed to improving that service and for modernizing our industry. We want to be part of the solution. Right now we are not even part of the process. Mayor Bowman, members of EPC, we ask to be heard. We support this motion.

Thank You

